



March 2023 Newsletter



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Ploughshares Calgary Society Presents:

Militarization and Climate Change

Join us for an educational meeting featuring Dr. Emily Gilbert



JOIN US ON ZOOM

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8TH

7:00PM MST

Co-Sponsored by Project Ploughshares (National)

Contact Us:



CHINESE PEACE PROPOSAL FOR THE RUSSIA/UKRAINE CONFLICT

Summarized by Haylie Smith

February 24th marked one year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The government of China released a 12-point peace proposal to end the Russia/Ukraine war.

1. Respecting the sovereignty of all countries;
2. Abandoning the Cold War mentality;
3. Ceasing hostilities;
4. Resuming peace talks;
5. Resolving the humanitarian crisis;
6. Protecting civilians and prisoners of war (POWs);
7. Keeping nuclear power plants safe;
8. Reducing strategic risks;
9. Facilitating grain exports;
10. Stopping unilateral sanctions;
11. Keeping industrial and supply chains stable;
12. Promoting post-conflict reconstruction.

Both Russia and Ukraine have shown interest in this peace proposal, with The Russian Foreign Ministry announcing that they 'share China's views'. Ukraine has cautiously welcomed the proposal, despite some concerns about China's related actions. These include reports that China is considering supplying weapons to Russia. President Zelensky has indicated that 'China's interest to broker peace is not bad' and has requested a summit meeting with Chinese Premier Xi Jinping to discuss further.

To read a more in-depth version of the 12-step proposal, click [here](#).

Confronting the Nuclear Threat

A year later, the attack on Ukraine has confirmed the nuclear threat to be real, imminent, and existential.

Dear Prime Minister,

With the world challenged by climate disasters, pandemics, regional wars, growing numbers of refugees, food insecurity and more, Russia's attack on Ukraine has driven the nuclear threat out of the political shadows, exposing yet another crisis that is real, imminent, and existential.

President Vladimir Putin's direct and implied threats to use nuclear weapons have shocked and angered the world, with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg calling the threats "dangerous and irresponsible." President Joe Biden has warned that Armageddon would be the inevitable result once the nuclear threshold was crossed.

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council (US, Russia, UK, France, China) have declared that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." The G20 recently stated that "the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible." Two measures designed to help prevent the "inadmissible" from happening are no-first-use commitments and the de-alerting of strategic nuclear weapons.

Therefore, Prime Minister, we call on the Government of Canada to:

1. Urge NATO and its three nuclear weapon state members (US, UK, and France) to commit never to be the first to launch a nuclear attack, and to work toward

universalizing that commitment (which China and India have already made); and

2. Encourage the United States and Russia to take all their strategic nuclear weapons off high alert (of the nine states with nuclear weapons, only the US and Russia maintain dangerous high-alert deployments).

We also urge you to publicly acknowledge the current nuclear crisis and call on all states with nuclear arms to honour the norm against nuclear weapons use that has been respected for the 77-years since the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Adopting these measures alone would, of course, not end the nuclear crisis, but it would make the world safer. It would diminish the likelihood of escalation to nuclear use in a conventional war. It would radically reduce the risk of the inadvertent launch of strategic nuclear weapons in response to false warnings of attack. It would also encourage a geopolitical environment more conducive to further progress in nuclear disarmament.

There will never be an easy time to mitigate and eventually eliminate the nuclear weapons threat to our planet; it is vital to act now.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Acker C.M.

Founder, Pathways to Education Canada

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, C.C.

Chair, World Refugee and Migration Council; former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada

Christopher R. Barnes, C.M.

Professor Emeritus, University of Victoria

Gerry Barr, C.M.

Former CEO, Directors Guild of Canada and Canadian Council for International Cooperation

Allan Gordon Bell, C.M.

Composer, Professor, University of Calgary

Robin Boadway, O.C.

Professor of Economics Emeritus, Queen's University

Paul Born, C.M.

Co-Founder and former CEO of Tamarack Institute; Senior Fellow, Ashoka

Mary Boyd, O.C.

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Co-founder and former President, Buckland and Taylor Ltd.

George D. B. Butterfield, O.C.

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Public Affiliate, Faculty of Arts, Toronto Metropolitan University

Shelagh Day, C.M.

Former Director of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission; President, Canadian Human Rights Reporter

Michael Dence, O.C.

Former Executive Director, The Royal Society of Canada

Howard Dyck, C.M.

Choral Conductor; Former CBC Radio Host of Choral Concert and Saturday Afternoon at the Opera

Michael N.A. Eskin, C.M.

Distinguished Professor, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, University of Manitoba

W. Paterson Ferns C.M.

President, Ferns Productions Inc.

Eric Friesen, C.M.

Former CBC Network Radio Host; Writer and Speaker on music, culture and faith

Robert Glossop, C.M.

Dr. Sherrill Grace, O.C.

Professor Emerita, The University of British Columbia

Judith G. Hall O.C.

Professor Emerita, The University of British Columbia

Hanny A. Hassan, C.M.

Past Chair, Council of Muslim Communities of Canada and Board of University of Western Ontario

R Brian Haynes, O.C.

Professor Emeritus, McMaster University

Paul Valdemar Horsdal C.M.

Valdy, Canadian Folksinger

Daniel Ish, O.C.

Professor Emeritus (Law), University of Saskatchewan

Bruce Kidd, O.C.

Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto

Bonnie Sherr Klein, O.C.

Documentary Filmmaker, Disability Activist

Kenneth Kramer, C.M.

Anita Kunz, O.C.

Dennis Lee, O.C.

Poet

Jacques Levesque, C.M.

Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, University of Quebec in Montreal

Margaret MacMillan, C.C.

Emeritus Professor of History, University of Toronto

Teresa MacNeil, C.M.

Joseph Mancini, C.M.

Stephanie Mancini, C.M.

The Working Centre

Peter G. Martin, O.C.

Professor, Canadian Institute for Theoretical Astro- physics, University of Toronto

David Matas, O.C.

Lawyer, International Human Rights

Gordon A. McBean, C.M.

Nobel Laureate for contributions to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007); Professor Emeritus, Western University

Roy Miki, C.M.

Robert V. Moody, O.C.

Emeritus Professor, University of Alberta

T. Jock Murray O.C.

Professor Emeritus, Dalhousie University

Alex Neve, O.C.

Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and Inter- national Affairs, University of Ottawa

Peter Newbery, C.M.

Clinical Prof. Emeritus in Family Medicine, University of British Columbia

Michael Ondaatje, O.C.

Novelist, Poet, Filmmaker

John C. Polanyi, C.C.

Nobel Laureate (Chemistry, 1986) University Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto

Lola Rasminsky,

C.M. Ernie Regehr

Co-Founder and former Executive Director, Project Ploughshares; Senior Fellow, The Simons Foundation Canada

Catherine Robbin, O.C.,

Associate Professor Emerita, York University

Hon. Douglas Roche, O.C.

Former Canadian Senator, Member of Parliament, and Ambassador for Disarmament

Ronald Rosenes,

C.M. Susan Sherwin,
Distinguished Research Professor, Dalhousie University

Karl Siegler, C.M.

Jennifer Allen Simons C.M.

Founder and President, The Simons Foundation Canada; Founding Partner, Global Zero

John P. Smol, O.C.

Distinguished University Professor, Queen's University

Gérard Snow, C.M.

Jurilinguiste, autrefois de l'Université de Moncton

Ian Tannock, C.M.

Emeritus Professor of Medicine, University of Toronto

Veronica Tennant, C.C.

Filmmaker, Author, Former Prima Ballerina National Ballet of Canada

Setsuko Thurlow, C.M.

Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Survivor and Nobel Peace Prize

Recipient on behalf of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, 2017

Jane Urquhart, O.C.

Novelist and Poet

Michel Vennat,

O.C. James Walker,
Distinguished Professor Emeritus, University of Waterloo

David Waltner-Toews, O.C.

University Professor Emeritus, University of Guelph

Dr. Gary Warner, C.M.

Professor Emeritus, McMaster University

Dr. Fred Wien, C.M.

Professor Emeritus, Dalhousie University



REGARDING IRAN AND INSPECTIONS BY THE IAEA

Summarized by Trudy Govier

It was reported March 4 that an agreement had been reached that there should be more inspections and reactivation of IAEA surveillance and monitoring cameras in Iran. This agreement was reported after IAEA head Rafael Grossi went to Iran to seek “credible assurances” that nuclear developments there were not aimed toward obtaining nuclear weapons. The context of his trip was that some IAEA inspectors had found uranium particles enriched to about 84%, which is just under the 90% level required for weapons. In 2015 there was an agreement called the “Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action” between Iran and world powers, regarding such inspections. In 2018 then U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from that agreement. Since 2021 there have been negotiations to revive that agreement, but these have stalled. (PBS Newshour)

(Note: The clarity and certainty of this agreement are not established as of March 6.)



INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY

Summarized by Haylie Smith

What is International Women's Day? International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8th and is an opportunity for the people of Canada and around the world to celebrate the women in their lives. International Women's Day is a global day organized annually that recognizes and celebrates the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. Celebrating International Women's Day is more important now than ever before after the assault on women's rights that has taken place over this past year, including the politicalization of women's bodies in the United States.

Women's rights are human rights. Women around the globe are still being imprisoned and harassed with violence for simply practicing their rights. Those rights are defined by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the following:

- the right to live a life free from violence and slavery
- the right to be educated
- the right to earn a fair and equal wage
- the right to own property
- the right to free expression
- voting rights



How can you get involved in International Women's Day in Canada? Here are some examples of how you can show your support:

- Wear something purple to show your support for International Women's Day
- Donate to Amnesty International Canada to support women in Canada and around the world.
- Volunteer to help raise awareness with Amnesty International Canada.
- Share inspirational stories of women on social media on International Women's Day and tag @AmnestyNow #IWD2023 #GenderEqualityNow

To learn more, click [here](#)



UPCOMING PLOUGHSHARES MEETINGS 2023

- April 12: Peace, Conflict, and Empathy: Leveraging Digital Games for Global Good. Presented by Paul Darvasi.** Paul Darvasi is an educator, researcher, and PhD candidate who keynotes, lectures, writes and consults on the intersection of digital games, simulations, narrative, social justice, culture and learning. He is the CEO and co-founder of Gold Bug Interactive, a digital design studio that leverages games and interactive media for education and social justice. He lectures at the University of Toronto and is a founding member of their Play Lab. He has consulted for Epic Games, National Association of Secondary School Principals, the US Department of Education, UNESCO, foundry10, Consumers International, iThrive, and Connected Camps and has participated in several international research projects.



EVENTS

- On Monday, March 13, ARK has partnered with Trolley 5 Brewpub to host an event of fun, networking, and painting - all for a great cause. All proceeds from this evening will go directly to our ARK Kids! ARK (Accessibility Renovations for Kids) is a local charity that provides home renovations for families with kids who struggle with mobility in their own home. Tickets range from \$30-\$50 and are available on [eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca).
- On Monday, March 13th, Creative Healing Hive will be hosting their monthly art therapy workshop offering adults an opportunity to connect with others and self through the art-making process. Tickets are free. Sign up on [eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca).
- On Saturday, March 25th, Twisted Element will be hosting Queen's For Hope, a drag show in support of Nadia's Hope Foundation. There will be a 50/50 raffle, gift baskets to win, and so much more. 18+ ONLY. Nadia's Hope Foundation is a non-profit charity in Calgary. Our mission is to raise awareness about domestic violence/abuse through public speaking. Tickets start at \$32 and are available on [eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca).



GOOD NEWS

- A new treaty has been created to protect nature on the high seas. The high seas means the vast ocean expanse that lies outside any country’s territorial waters (about 50% of Earth’s surface). The treaty is the result of nearly 20 years of effort. More than 150 countries were involved in negotiations. Once it is ratified the treaty will provide a legally binding mechanism for conserving species and ecosystems, and managing activities that could negatively affect ocean life. It will also allow for the setting up of marine protected areas which are part of the overall goal of protecting 30% of the planet for nature, by 2030. The treaty includes standards for environmental impact assessment and fair use of the ocean’s genetic resources. It will likely take several years for most countries to ratify it. (Source: Ivan Semeniuk, “Conservation groups hail historic deal to protect ocean life,” Globe and Mail, March 6, 2023).
- The Canadian Museums Association (CMA) has appointed Janis Kahentóktha Monture as its new executive director and chief executive officer, making Monture the first Indigenous person in the role. Monture will be leaving her role as Woodland Cultural Centre executive director and taking her new role on February 27th. Monture's new role will see her implement the 67th call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – a national review in collaboration with Indigenous communities of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (CBC News, February 14, 2023).



Janis Monture.

Photo Credits: Patricio Munoz, CBC News



GOOD NEWS

- A 28 year old Canadian woman, Angela Rafuse, has helped 100 seniors re-home their pets before passing away, bringing ‘peace of mind’. Rafuse was inspired to create her charity after her 85-year-old grandfather died, leaving his cat, Mackenzie, without a home. Rafuse took her grandfather's cat when no one else in her immediate family wanted to take responsibility. Angela’s nonprofit, ‘My Grandfather’s Cat’, facilitates adoptions of dogs and cats belonging to seniors who are either terminally ill or wishing to enter a retirement home. (Good News Network, February 26, 2023).
- 50 years after starting his PhD journey, 76 year old Nick Axten received his PhD in Philosophy. His journey started back in 1970, the year he received a prestigious Fulbright scholarship at the University of Pittsburgh. But after five years he returned to the UK with the Ph.D. unfinished. He restarted the process at Bristol 7 years ago with the aim of finishing a Masters in the Arts, before carrying on to a Ph.D. in Philosophy, finishing in 2022 aged 75. This year, he received his Doctorate in front of his wife Claire and 11-year-old granddaughter Freya. (Good News Network, February 16, 2023).



Dr. Nick Axten
 Photo Credits: Good News Network



MUSEUM INITIATIVE UPDATE

Our contact person at the Glenbow Museum tells us that our proposal is taken seriously and not rejected. Despite repeated assurances that we will hear from them within a few weeks, or within a week, or ‘soon’, we have yet no response. It is hard to proceed under these circumstances. One interpretation of this tentative feedback is that the proposal is of interest but is controversial at Glenbow. Another is that with the museum redevelopment, there is simply a lot going on. It is hard to know. In the meantime, efforts are being made to further develop and enrich a peace exhibit planned by the Floating Lantern sub-committee, hopefully to be shown in the Central Library during the month of August, 2023. In addition to its previous photos, the enhanced exhibit would include material about conflict resolution and a number of peace heroes, including such figures as Nelson Mandela, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Crowfoot. Nine of our members, including five board members, are working on relevant research and writing. Anna Pena Egle, Haylie Smith, and others will be developing posters for that exhibit.



HAYLIE'S CORNER

A new monthly segment written by our staff person, Haylie Smith.

This month I would like to dedicate this corner to Laura Plantje. Laura met my sister, Lauren, while working at Benevity here in Calgary. Lauren and Laura quickly became the best of friends and my sister has always expressed that Laura has a heart of gold. Laura unexpectedly passed away after receiving heart surgery on February 23, 2023. Laura was just 34 years old. Laura was an organ donor and has given other people a chance at a new life after her passing. Laura spent a lot of time fundraising and advocating for Parkinsons, a disease that her father lives with, and her family has asked that any memorial donations to Laura be directed to the Parkinson Association of Alberta. If you would like to donate in Laura's honour, please click [here](#).



Laura Plantje

April 11, 1988 - February 23, 2023

